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## The jealous Latin lover : Masculinity, emotions and national identity in 1950s and 1960s Italian popular culture

Cullen, N. (2017). The jealous Latin lover : Masculinity, emotions and national identity in 1950s and 1960s Italian popular culture. *Snodi: Pubblici e Privati nella Storia Contemporanea*, 179-205.

### Published in:

*Snodi: Pubblici e Privati nella Storia Contemporanea*

### Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

### Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:

[Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal](#)

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Niamh Cullen

## **The jealous Latin lover. Redefining gender relations and emotions in the Italian economic miracle**

### ***Snodi*, Vol. 16: Normare la sessualità**

“Amor vuol dire gelosia” – love means jealousy. These words were scribbled in the margins of a sixteen year-old schoolgirl’s diary in southern Italy, in 1949<sup>1</sup>. Maria was born and grew up in the town of Capurso, near the southern port city of Bari. Her school diary was interspersed with short phrases which sound like quotations picked up from her day-to-day life: school, friends, family, religion and probably cinema, popular songs, books and magazines along with brief snatches of thought or observation, from football news to the local cult of the Virgin Mary.

This article is concerned with the meaning behind this scribbled note – “love means jealousy” – which appears in the diary like a saying that Maria heard somewhere and jotted down, rather than a thought completely her own. The idea that love was intimately connected with jealousy was clearly a familiar notion in 1949. However in the following decades both Italian culture and the media were to become saturated with the notion of jealousy. Romantic jealousy became the central plot device of countless films as well as in fiction, fitting all genres from comedy to melodrama. Glossy news magazines and women’s magazines – which were themselves becoming a mass phenomenon by the 1950s – as well as newspapers, ran detailed enquiries on the subject of jealousy, enlisting the opinions of ordinary people, celebrities, feminists and psychologists on the nature of this insidious emotion<sup>2</sup>. The extent of the attention paid to jealousy might suggest the perception at least, of an ‘epidemic’ of jealousy in Italy between the 1950s and the 1970s.

The online archive of Turin-based broadsheet *La Stampa* indicates that mentions of jealousy in the daily news did rise sharply in the period in question, with mentions of jealousy in the newspaper more than doubling between 1950 and 1960 at 4838 mentions with respect to 1942 mentions in the previous decade and remaining steady throughout the years in question<sup>3</sup>. While jealousy could have several meanings in the context of daily news, the majority of mentions referred to either crimes of passion or intimate violence, or to films, plays or works of literature which took romantic jealousy as their subject. The relationship between reportage and reality is of course a complex one, but the data from *La Stampa* does give a sound basis with which to measure at least the perception of jealousy in Italian culture and daily life. There is one caveat to be considered: the reporting of ‘cronaca nera’ or crime news was restricted during the fascist period<sup>4</sup>. The increase in reporting of domestic and intimate partner violence and in crimes of passion in the 1950s could be attributed at least in part to the loosening of these restrictions and after the restricted use of paper in the immediate aftermath of war,

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Maselli, *Diari, 1948-1957*, Archivio Diaristico Nazionale, DP/07.

<sup>2</sup> On the expansion of the periodical publishing in post-war Italy – both women’s magazines and illustrated news magazines – see David Forgacs and Stephen Gundle, *Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2007, pp. 95-223; Anna Bravo, *Il fotoromanzo*, il Mulino, Bologna 1995 and Giovanni De Luna, Nanda Torcella e Paolo Murialdi, a cura di, *La stampa italiana dalla resistenza agli anni sessanta*, Laterza, Bari 1980, pp. 248-54.

<sup>3</sup> Historical archive of “La Stampa” available at: <http://www.lastampa.it/archivio-storico/>, search for term “gelosia” between 1940 and 1970.

<sup>4</sup> Mauro Forno, *La stampa del ventennio. Strutture e trasformazioni nello stato totalitario*, Rizzoli, Milano 2005, pp. 125-6.

to increased length of daily newspapers and thus, space for such reportage<sup>5</sup>. However in line with other socio-cultural transitions taking place in post-war Italy, there was a shift in vocabulary as crimes of honour were reframed as crimes of passion or jealousy, and the link between violent crime and jealousy reinforced by popular culture.

Jealousy could have different meanings in different contexts, and to different people; it might be an expression of love – and the scribbled note in the adolescent Maria’s diary suggests the power of this notion – while it could also have much more negative connotations. Meaning and usage varied according to context while class, region, gender and generation also impacted the ways in which it was applied and understood. Neither was it always understood strictly as an emotion; Thomas Dixon cautions against the simple conflation of terms such as passion and sentiment with the psychological category of emotion<sup>6</sup>. In twentieth century Italy too, “gelosia” could be used to describe both a feeling, and a range of behaviour. In legal language and crime reportage, jealousy was related to crimes of passion, and to the notion of family honour; both of which had a long history in Italy and indeed European law and thought<sup>7</sup>. Magazine features were more likely to discuss jealousy in the language of psychology, while popular film, as well as the serialised fiction of a magazine such as *Grand Hotel*, borrowed from melodrama in their exaggerated performance of jealousy as an emotion. However the fact that there is a marked increase in the use of this word to describe varying shades of feeling and behaviour in the decades in question, begs further inquiry. This article will tease out the multiple meanings of what was referred to as “gelosia” or jealousy in the period from the 1950s to the early 1970s, in order to find out what the heightened use of the term can tell us about post-war Italian society. Focusing primarily on the representation and performance of jealousy in cinema and popular magazines – advice columns, features and fiction – this article will also consider crime reportage. By considering these different sources together, the extent to which language was shared and borrowed, and the sources slipped between different constructions of jealousy, becomes clear. Whether Italians really experienced more jealousy in these years cannot easily be measured by the historian, although the note scribbled in the margins of the school diary does suggest a link between popular culture and personal understandings of love and jealousy. However by tracing the varying representations and meanings in a number of cultural media aimed at different demographic groups, paying attention to how they changed over time and placing them in the context of the enormous social and cultural changes of the two decades in question, I will address the complex interplay between representation and reality in these sources.

### *Jealousy and the history of the emotions*

Before considering jealousy in the context of post-war Italy, it is first necessary to consider what historians might mean by the study of an emotion such as jealousy in the context of social and cultural history. It will be useful to keep in mind Stearns’ term “emotionology” – coined to describe the discourse surrounding emotional norms and

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<sup>5</sup> On the press in the immediate aftermath of war, see Paolo Murialdi, *La Stampa italiana del dopoguerra 1943-1972*, Laterza, **Bari** 1973.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003, pp. 1-25.

<sup>7</sup> Ernesto De Cristofaro, *Retorica forense e valori di comunità. Questioni di onore in alcuni processi siciliani*, in Francesco Migliorino e Giacomo Pace Gravina, a cura di, *Cultura e tecnica forense tra dimensione siciliana e vocazione europea*, il Mulino, Bologna 2003, pp. 371-410; Ute Frevert, *Honour and/or /as Passion. Historical trajectories of legal defenses*, in “Rechtsgeschichte-Legal History”, 2014, n. 22, pp. 245-255.

standards – particularly when examining mass media sources<sup>8</sup>. However Reddy's notion of "emotives" attempts to delve further than mere discourse, in order to capture the relationship between the language of emotions and the way in which they are experienced. "Emotives" for Reddy are utterances about feelings, which are "at once managerial and exploratory"; such words and expressions are called up in an attempt both to evoke the feeling and to name it<sup>9</sup>. Reddy thus draws attention to the way in which language necessarily structures thought and feeling in both the availability and absence of suitable words to name and describe physical and mental sensations. While this article will be concerned largely with discourse, it will also make use of Reddy's framework in order to consider how the changing language about emotions might also reflect and structure experience. Monique Scheer has argued however that historians must go beyond the study of language, since emotions are always embodied<sup>10</sup>. In cautioning historians to consider the relationship of emotions to the human body, Scheer's approach is particularly useful in considering the case of jealousy in post-war Italy. Magazine features, advice columns and films from the period all repeatedly emphasise how jealousy was strongly experienced in the body as well as in the mind; it was in fact frequently described as an "illness" which could take over the body and cause uncontrollable mental and physical symptoms.

For historians, however, the social and collective meaning of emotions is also crucial in any consideration of emotions and socio-cultural change. Benno Gammerl's term "emotional styles" borrows from Barbara Rosenwein's "emotional communities" but also addresses the multiplicity of communities that a person might belong to or slip between in an urban, industrialised society. As such it is particularly valuable in considering post-war Italy, as a place where migration, urbanisation and the mass media were contributing to the fracturing of old communities and the creation of new and multiple ones along the lines of gender, generation, politics and work. In examining what jealousy can reveal about post-war Italian society, this article will therefore keep in mind the observation that emotions are embedded in both language – structuring it and themselves structured by the availability or absence of appropriate words – and in the body. As much as the experience of emotions is a personal one which the historian can never fully access, the vocabulary of emotions in language and gesture is both collective and socially constructed and can therefore change over time. Peter Stearns, in his work on jealousy in modern US society, argued that "the struggle over jealousy was in many ways a twentieth century innovation in emotional life"<sup>11</sup>. The social context in the United States was quite different to that of Italy. Indeed Stearns located much of the anxiety about romantic jealousy between the 1930s and the 1950s, since many of the changes to courtship and gender roles occurred during these decades, from "dating" to women entering the workforce in large number. However the links that Stearns draws between both anxieties about jealousy and efforts to control it, and the changing nature of courtship, marriage and gender roles in modern society, are an

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<sup>8</sup> Carol and Peter Stearns, *Emotionology. Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards*, in "American Historical Review", 1980, n. 4, pp. 813-836.

<sup>9</sup> Jan Plamper, *The History of the Emotions. An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns* in "History and Theory", 2010, n. 49, pp. 237-265; p. 240. For a more complete outline of his approach to the history of the emotions, see William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of the Emotions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Monique Scheer, *Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and is that what makes them have a history)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotions*, in "History and Theory", 2012, n. 51, pp. 193-220.

<sup>11</sup> Peter N. Stearns, *Jealousy. The evolution of an emotion in American history*, New York University Press, New York 1989, p. 149.

indication of what it can reveal about the impact of urbanization and mass culture on Italian emotional life. The most significant transformations in Italian intimate life can be located in the post-war years, as the economic miracle brought about structural changes to family, marriage and gender roles through migration, urbanization and the rise of mass culture. It is in these years, therefore, that discourses about the prevalence of jealousy, and the need to control it, can be found. The next section locates this investigation of changing 'emotional styles' in its historical context.

### *The Italian economic miracle: a changing society*

Fuelled by the manufacturing boom of the northern industrial cities, the unprecedented levels of economic growth seen in the late 1950s and early 1960s heralded a social, cultural and consumer revolution in Italy<sup>12</sup>. One of the ways in which ordinary lives were altered most dramatically by the 'miracle' was through migration. Paul Ginsborg and Guido Crainz place the numbers involved in inter-regional migration from 1955 to 1970 between nine and ten million, while migration from rural to urban contexts within regions was also common, particularly in Lombardy, Piedmont and Tuscany<sup>13</sup>. Consumer culture and the rise of the mass media – cinema and the periodical press in the 1950s and by the late 1950s and 1960s, television – also transformed values and attitudes, prompting Italians to seek beyond the local to the national and international. Migration, consumption and the rise of the mass media all had a profound impact on gender roles and family structure.

Chiara Saraceno has charted the changing structure of the Italian family, while Simonetta Piccone Stella and Renate Siebert have examined the impact of these changes on gender roles and on women in particular in both regional and national contexts<sup>14</sup>. Migration had a significant effect on young women's choices and opportunities from the 1950s onwards, although the impact varied widely by region.<sup>15</sup> While there was some panic reported in northern and central Italy about young women who did not want to marry peasants and were therefore driving migration, in reality, most young women who migrated either did so to work in service or as married

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<sup>12</sup> Emanuela Scarpellini, *L'Italia dei consumi. Dalla belle époque al nuovo millennio*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2008, pp. 130-132.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, Penguin, London 1990, p. 219; Guido Crainz, *Storia del miracolo economico. Culture, identità, trasformazioni fra anni cinquanta e sessanta*, Donzelli, Roma 2005, p. 108. See also Stefano Gallo, *Senza attraversare le frontiere. Le migrazioni interne dall'Unità a oggi*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Chiara Saraceno, "La famiglia: i paradossi della costruzione del privato" in P. Aries and G. Duby (eds.), *La vita privata. Il Novecento*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2001; Simonetta Piccone Stella, *Ragazze del Sud: famiglie, figlie, studentesse in una città meridionale*, Editori Riuniti, Roma 1979 and *La prima generazione: Ragazze e ragazzi nel miracolo economico*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 1993; Renate Siebert, *E femmina però è bella. Tre generazioni di donne al sud*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino 1991. More recent studies include Jane Slaughter "What's New? Genere e modernità nella cultura aziendale" and Maria Chiara Liguori, "La parità si acquista ai grandi magazzini? Boom economico e trasformazione del modello femminile" in Paolo Capuzzo, *Genere, generazione e consumi nell'Italia degli anni Sessanta*, Carocci, Roma 2003, pp. 139-54 and pp. 155-68 and Enrica Asquer, *Storia intima dei ceti medi. Una capitale e una periferia nell'Italia del miracolo economico*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2011, esp. pp. 114-160. For some general considerations see Perry Willson, *Women in Twentieth Century Italy*, Palgrave, London 2009, pp. 112-128.

<sup>15</sup> On migration and gender roles see in particular Anna Badino, *Tutte a casa? Donne tra migrazione e lavoro nella Torino degli anni sessanta*, Viella, Roma, 2007 and Monica Pacini, *Donne al lavoro nella Terza Italia: San Miniano dalla ricostruzione alla società dei servizi*, Edizioni ETS, Pisa, 2009.

women<sup>16</sup>. Such complaints thus betrayed more about popular anxieties about urbanisation and changing gender roles than about real migration patterns. Education was also expanding rapidly in these years with the number of women attending middle school, secondary school and university almost doubling between 1955 and 1963<sup>17</sup>. The number of women students attending university also doubled between 1960 and 1968<sup>18</sup>. While the economic boom did create more visible and glamorous roles for women – from air hostesses and models to receptionists, travel guides and television hosts – the reality was that women’s employment opportunities did not increase at a significant pace during the 1950s and 1960s<sup>19</sup>. The perception however that women’s roles in society and in the family were changing, was a strong one in popular culture and the media, and can be seen throughout the 1950s and 1960s, whether in the belief that women rather than men were driving migration, or in debates about prostitution and women’s public visibility<sup>20</sup>.

Migration and the rise of mass culture, together with changing gender roles and family structure, also brought with them new patterns of courtship and marriage. As urban patterns of living gradually became more prevalent across Italy, the role of family became less important to courtship and young Italians increasingly sought to choose their own marriage partners. Encouraged by the messages of mass culture – from film to the serialised stories and advice columns in magazines such as *Grand Hotel* – the notion that marriage was bound up not in family interests but in love was beginning to take hold among ordinary men and women<sup>21</sup>. The notion that ordinary people could and should marry for love, was one that was taking hold more generally in the post-war West, as Claire Langhamer has charted for Britain. Born out of the desire for regeneration in 1945, she argues, it was nourished by the growing consumer culture and mass media<sup>22</sup>. While Italian women who lived in rural contexts were often under pressure to marry in order to relieve their families of the ‘burden’ of their care, the availability of other opportunities in work and education was gradually changing this mentality. This can be seen in Baglioni’s interviews of young women living in and around Milan in the early 1960s. Although most girls hoped to marry, they acknowledged that it was not the only path; a woman might also have a career<sup>23</sup>. As the role of family in courtship and marriage began to weaken from the 1960s onwards, the notion of honour which had been particular prevalent in the south was becoming discredited, just as the role of Catholicism in governing sexual ‘morality’ was lessening across Italy<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> See Nuto Revelli, *L’anello forte. La donna: storie di vita contadina*, Einaudi, Torino 1985, pp. lxxxix-xcv and Lorenzo Milani, *Esperienze pastorali*, Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, Firenze 1958.

<sup>17</sup> Willson, *Women in Twentieth Century Italy*, cit., p. 117.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Lumley, *States of emergency: Cultures of Revolt in Italy from 1968 to 1978*, Verso, London 1990, p. 55.

<sup>19</sup> Willson, *Women in Twentieth Century Italy*, cit., p. 117-120. See also Luisa Tasca, *The “average housewife” in post World War II Italy*, in “The Journal of Women’s History”, 2004, n. 2, pp. 96-99.

<sup>20</sup> On debates about prostitution and women’s visibility, see Sandro Bellassai, *La legge del desiderio. Il progetto Merlin e l’Italia degli anni Cinquanta*, Carocci, Roma 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Niamh Cullen, *Changing emotional landscapes? “Grand Hotel” and representations of love and courtship in 1950s Italy*, in “Social and Cultural History”, 2014, n. 2, pp. 285-306.

<sup>22</sup> Claire Langhamer, *The English in Love. The Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Guido Baglioni, *I giovani nella società industriale. Ricerca sociologica condotta in una zona dell’Italia del nord*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1962, pp. 109-117.

<sup>24</sup> On the Catholic Church and post-war Italy, see Patrick McCarthy, *The Church in post war Italy* in Patrick McCarthy (ed.), *Italy since 1945*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2000, pp. 134-41, and Percy

As the 1960s wore on, there was also a concerted campaign for family law reform, both within parliament and by left-wing and feminist groups<sup>25</sup>. In 1968 the Constitutional Court ruled that the crime of female adultery – unlike male adultery which was only a crime if carried out in the family home – was unconstitutional<sup>26</sup>. The relevant laws on adultery were repealed in the following years, while in 1975 a comprehensive bill of family law reform was made law, which abolished the husband's status as legal head of household as well as the category of illegitimacy<sup>27</sup>. Although divorce was not legalised until 1970 and confirmed by referendum in 1974, the topic was regularly debated in the mainstream media from the late 1960s<sup>28</sup>. Arguments against divorce often linked it to unease about female adultery<sup>29</sup>. Jealousy, it will be argued here, was thus the manifestation of deep set anxieties both about the changing roles of women, and the changing purpose of both marriage and the Italian family.

*“Amor vuol dire gelosia”: love and jealousy in post-war Italy*

Jealousy was not of course a new discovery in post-war Italian culture. However references to the emotion were comparatively few in folk culture across rural Italy, despite romantic love being a common and recurring theme of folk music<sup>30</sup>. In inter-war cinema, jealousy certainly made an appearance in romantic comedies, but it was usually treated ironically or with distance, and considered an aside to the main plot<sup>31</sup>. Typical was Negroni's 1931 film *Due cuori felici*, in which Clara invented a story about her violently jealous fiancé in order to escape from an awkward situation in a nightclub.<sup>32</sup> More exceptional was Poggioli's 1943 melodrama *Gelosia*. Remade in the following decade by Pietro Germi, it perhaps better fitted with the heightened

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Allum, *Uniformity undone. Aspects of Catholic culture in post war Italy* in Zygmunt Baranski and Robert Lumley (eds.), *Culture and conflict in post-war Italy. Essays on mass and popular culture*, Palgrave, London 1990, pp.79-96.

<sup>25</sup> For further details of these campaigns, see especially the archive of the Unione Donne Italiane, sezione tematica “Famiglia-divorzio”, bb. 1-25.

<sup>26</sup> Willson, *Women in Twentieth Century Italy*, cit., p. 136.

<sup>27</sup> Ivi, pp. 159-60. On the campaigns for family law reform and the press coverage of these legislative changes, see archive Unione Donne Italiane, sezione tematica “Famiglia-divorzio”, b. 6, fasc. 96-102 and b. 9, fasc. 129.

<sup>28</sup> See Fiamma Lussana, *L'Italia del divorzio 1946-1974*, Carocci, Roma 2014 and Mark Seymour, *Debating Divorce in Italy. Marriage and the Making of Modern Italians 1860-1974*, Palgrave, London 2006, pp. 189-222.

<sup>29</sup> This can be seen in many popular culture sources. For example in Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1965 documentary film *Comizi d'amore* one young man declared himself against divorce because if his wife was to leave him, “io resterei sempre un cornuto”. The fear that divorce would bring about female adultery was also used by Christian Democrats campaigning against divorce in Sicily in the lead up to the 1974 referendum. See Maureen J. Giovannini, *Female Chastity Codes in the circum-Mediterranean. Comparative Perspectives*, in David Gilmore (ed.), *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, American Anthropological Association, Washington DC 1987, pp. 61-74; pp. 66-7.

<sup>30</sup> See for example Roberto Leydi, *Canti popolari italiani*, Mondadori, Milano 1973; Roberto Leydi, a cura di, *Le tradizioni popolari in Italia. Canti e musiche popolari*, Mondadori, Milano 1990 and Brizio Montinaro, a cura di, *Canti di pianto e dell'amore dell'antico Salento*, Bompiani, Milano 2000.

<sup>31</sup> Studies of film during the fascist era mention very little about jealousy, even in the context of gender and sexuality. See for example David Forgacs, *Sex in the Cinema. Regulation and Transgression in Italian Films, 1930-1943* in Jacqueline Reich and Piero Garofalo (eds), *Re-viewing Fascism. Italian Cinema, 1922-1943*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington (IN) 2002, pp. 141-172; Peter Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema*, Continuum, London 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Marcia Landy, *The Folklore of Consensus. Theatricality in the Italian Cinema 1930-1943*, SUNY Press, New York 1988, p. 68.



sensibilities of the post-war years towards the power of jealousy<sup>33</sup>. Popular romantic comedies, from the second in Dino Comencini's trilogy of films set in rural Abruzzo, *Pane, amore e gelosia* in 1954 to Vittorio De Sica's *Matrimonio all'Italiana* (1964) and Antonio Pietrangeli's *Il magnifico cornuto* (1964) were just some of those that featured jealousy as a main mechanism for creating tension and driving the plot forward<sup>34</sup>. It was not only popular commercial films that took jealousy seriously in these years; Germi's 1953 remake of the earlier *Gelosia* was a dark melodrama, while Visconti's *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* (1960) also dealt with the violent consequences of extreme jealousy. The connection between romantic love and jealousy was accepted without much question in all of these films, as if the connection was a natural one which needed little examination. This was the case even when it was the excesses of jealousy which created romantic tension or dark drama and drove the plot forward. In the 1964 film *Il magnifico cornuto*, the exchanges between husband and wife reveal that a certain amount of jealousy was considered desirable in order to keep the romance in their relationship alive<sup>35</sup>. On discovering that her husband had been following her, Maria Grazia told him that she was impressed by the attention he paid to her. In her mind, "quando si vuol bene si è sempre un po' gelosi". The film of course would go on to reveal that striking the right balance between having just enough and not too much of the emotion, was more difficult than it seemed.

In films such as these, the connection between love and jealousy was presented in a light hearted manner, even as *Il magnifico cornuto* dealt with the excesses of jealousy. Best-selling magazine *Grand Hotel*, which reached a circulation of between 3 and 15 million by the early 1960s, and was aimed mainly at lower middle-class, working-class and peasant women, also traded primarily on its illustrated stories about love, both serialised and short stories<sup>36</sup>. Jealousy again drove many of these plots, creating tension between a couple which could be neatly resolved by the end of the story. In these stories, jealousy could lead to tragic misunderstanding or melodrama as well as to comic mishap. Reviewing the plot synopses for a sample set of issues from the first six months of 1950, 1955 and 1959, jealousy peaked as a central storyline in 1955, with war and poverty creating much of the romantic tension in earlier years while migration, work and changing gender roles dominated the storylines of the late 1950s. Usually, although not always, it was the man's jealousy that took centre stage, causing either a rift in the relationship or irrationally controlling behaviour on his part. His suspicions about his girlfriend, fiancée or wife were also always unfounded; although the Catholic Church condemned magazines like *Grand Hotel* as immoral for their association with commercial culture and Americanisation, the morality of its fiction was in fact highly conservative and female infidelity was rarely an acceptable subject<sup>37</sup>. In cases of female jealousy, suspicions did sometimes prove correct.

In the 1955 story *The thermometer of love*, the plot hinged around three sisters who were about to marry<sup>38</sup>. When discussing how they would keep their husband's love

<sup>33</sup> On Poggioli's *Gelosia*, see Landy, *Folklore of Consensus*, cit., pp. 229-34.

<sup>34</sup> On the "consumable realism" of Dino Comencini's *Pane, amore e fantasia* film trilogy, see Millicent Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton (NJ) 1986, pp. 122-143.

<sup>35</sup> The final episode of the 1964 film *La mia signora*, directed by Tinto Brass, Mauro Bolognini and Luigi Comencini also contained a similar message.

<sup>36</sup> Anna Bravo, *Il fotoromanzo*, il Mulino, Bologna 2003; Cullen, *Changing Emotional Landscapes?*, cit.

<sup>37</sup> Bravo, *Il fotoromanzo*, cit.

<sup>38</sup> Fabio Pan, *Il termometro dell'amore*, in "Grand Hotel", 26 November 1955.



when married, the youngest sister Maria repeated the notion that jealousy was the real test of love. Each of the sisters then asked her fiancé what he would do if she betrayed him with another man. The older two sisters were given answers involving murder and separation. Maria instead was told by her fiancé Gianni that he trusted she would never betray him. His mild mannered response left her unsatisfied, as she had hoped for something closer to the jealous passion displayed by her sisters' fiancés. When they married, she was again disconcerted to find that Gianni allowed her to come and go as she pleased; she would have been happier to have him confine her to the home as a mark of his jealousy and protectiveness. Attempts to provoke Gianni's jealousy by going out and flirting with other men again were in vain. However when Maria found a gun in the house, she was finally satisfied. "Non credeva al fatto dei viaggi di notte e quella rivoltella forse Gianni l'aveva acquistata per paura che lei... Finalmente! E per quella notte la giovane sposa fece sogni felici"<sup>39</sup>.

The implication was of course that Gianni was prepared to kill her if she should stray, an intention Maria took as a sign of his love for her. It turned out however that Gianni had no such intentions; he was in fact engaged in a plot of his own to prove to Maria how ridiculous her concerns were. At the end of the story, Maria's foolish and misguided expectations were unmasked, while Gianni also agreed to pay more attention to her. Although Maria had perhaps taken it to greater extremes, her ideas about love fitted the endlessly repeated notion that love was intimately connected with jealousy and that jealousy was proof of love.

#### *"Quella terribile cosa che si chiama gelosia": jealousy as pathology*

Although jealousy was recognised as a normal part of romance, it was still not an emotion with which the media and popular culture was entirely at ease. In 1959, glossy women's magazine *Grazia* ran a multi-page inquiry into what they termed "quella terribile cosa": jealousy. *Grazia*, unlike *Grand Hotel*, was not a new post-war publication but an older women's magazine founded in 1938 and aimed at a more strictly urban middle class public<sup>40</sup>. While *Grand Hotel* borrowed from melodrama in its fiction, *Grazia* aligned itself with a more modern, cosmopolitan image, mainly featuring translated short stories in its fiction pages. Its readership was also most likely older than that of *Grand Hotel* and the advice of agony aunt Signora Quickly more conservative<sup>41</sup>. In the inquiry, Brunello Vandano used psychology to delve into the phenomenon of jealousy which he perceived to be plaguing the relationships of Italians. Jealousy, although clearly situated in the exclusivity of romantic love, was as a pathology when it was experienced in excess. It was "morboso", a "malattia", and a "terrore". For the sufferer, the boundaries between reality and fantasy became blurred, and he or she would inevitably lose all judgement at least for one moment. Two separate examples were used to describe the experiences of men and women. A man might catch a glimpse of a woman passenger in a car and imagine that it was his girlfriend. This would then set his mind working, even if he was fairly sure it was not her; was she with friends, or a colleague? Was it an innocent encounter or not? The woman on the other hand might be jealous of her boyfriend's female friend. The differences between male

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<sup>39</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>40</sup> See Raffaele de Berti, *Il nuovo periodico. Rotocalchi tra fotogiornalismo, cronaca e costume* in Raffaele de Berti, Irene Piazzoni, a cura di, *Forme e modelli del rotocalco italiano tra fascismo e guerra*, Monduzzi, Milano 2009, pp. 3-64 and Penny Morris, *A Window on the Private Sphere: Advice Columns, Marriage, and the Evolving Family in 1950s Italy*, in "The Italianist", 2007, n. 2, pp. 304-332.

<sup>41</sup> On *Grazia's* advice column, see Morris, *A Window on the Private Sphere*, cit, pp. 304-332..

and female jealousy were clear; the man's jealousy was based on the possibility of his girlfriend being out in other company, while the woman's jealousy was based on a more specific romantic rivalry. While the emotion could be experienced by both men and women, it had specific gendered paths. For women it was always bound up with love, whereas for men it might also be about the desire to possess a woman independent of romantic feeling. In its most extreme form, jealousy had an intensely physical side. The experience of the man who thought he saw his beloved in a car with another man was described thus: "ormai il suo viso è impallidito, il cuore ha saltato un battito, e per un istante egli ha provato una voglia animalesca di mordere"<sup>42</sup>.

The notion of jealousy as an intense bodily experience and even illness, while packaged here in the language of psychology, had its antecedents in both popular melodrama and the more psychological cinema of directors such as Antonioni<sup>43</sup>. Geremi's 1953 *Gelosia* told the story of Sicilian marquis Antonio who fell in love with peasant woman Agrippina. Although he felt unable to marry her because of the difference in their stations, he was fiercely possessive of her and suffered from extreme jealousy. Although he arranged a marriage between Agrippina and one of his servants in order to keep her close to him, he was driven to kill this man on their wedding day by an irrational, jealous rage. The only explanation he could give for the crime was that he was driven to madness: "Ero impazzito. Ero come impazzito dalla gelosia". The emotion was, for him, an intense bodily experience which eventually became an illness. He fell unconscious for three days and eventually, tortured by both jealousy and guilt, lost both the control of his mind and body. At the close of the film, we see him slumped in a chair, completely helpless and unaware of his surroundings. While the film was not a great critical success for Geremi – and was indeed later dismissed by the director himself as exaggerated and excessive – the notion of jealousy as a form of illness was certainly not unique to his film<sup>44</sup>. A decade later, the acclaimed comedy *Il magnifico cornuto* (Antonio Pietrangeli, 1964) portrayed it in similar terms. Although he had no grounds to do so, Andrea became suspicious that his wife Maria Grazia was having an affair and their relationship was eventually destroyed by his intense jealousy. As Andrea's jealousy and obsession intensified, he experienced it more strongly in his body suffering first from insomnia and then from fever. Violent mania followed and a strong physical illness that rendered him bedridden followed. Unlike Antonio's case, Andrea's jealousy was a passing affliction which was cured; however the course of their physical symptoms was very similar. While vividly dramatized in these films, the notion of jealousy as a sort of illness was a deep seated one in post-war Italy, found in a number of cultural forms. It also crossed over to personal experience. Advice columns in popular magazines – which could be seen as reflecting both experience and cultural motifs, as well as mediating both – regularly alluded to jealousy as illness<sup>45</sup>. A particularly striking example is that of historian Luisa Passerini who has written about her experiences of love and sexuality in late 1960s Italy. Since she and her partner had strong political ideas about sexual liberation, she did not allow herself to openly feel jealousy when he experimented with other women. The feeling was instead experienced in the body, as a physical fever<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Brunello Vandano, *Le insidie dell'amore. Quella terribile cosa che si chiama gelosia*, in "Grazia", 26 July 1959.

<sup>43</sup> See Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema*, cit., pp. 127-158.

<sup>44</sup> Carlo Carotti, *Le donne, la famiglia, il lavoro nel cinema di Pietro Geremi*, Lampi di Stampa, Milano 2011, pp. 79-80.

<sup>45</sup> Gabriella Parca, *Le italiane si confessano*, Parenti, Firenze 1959, pp. 215-6.

<sup>46</sup> Luisa Passerini, *Autoritratto di gruppo*, Giunti, Firenze 1988, pp. 67-8.

### *Class, generation and 'modernity'*

Jealousy loomed large in the 'neorealismo rosa' of post-war commercial cinema, such as the second in Luigi Comencini's trilogy of films set in rural Abruzzo, *Pane, amore e gelosia* (1954). Such films paid particular attention to the lives of ordinary rural and working class Italians, depicting their poverty, hardship and the challenges albeit in a somewhat romanticised fashion<sup>47</sup>. It also played a starring role in Visconti's neorealist classic *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*. However as the examples above indicate, it was by no means considered simply an affliction of the lower classes. Mario Camerini's 1937 film *Il signor Max* had poked fun at the 'bourgeois' jealousy of 'Max', suggesting that the wealthy cosmopolitans with whom he shared a cruise ship were beyond such base emotions as they belonged to a world where divorce and remarriage were common<sup>48</sup>. However in post-war cinema, the opposite seemed true. Germi's jealous and violent lover was an aristocrat, while Pietrangeli's Andrea was a wealthy, urbane man who lived in a mansion with his wife and had a glamorous social life. As one character remarked to Andrea's wife, Maria Grazia, "considero la gelosia un lusso di chi ha soldi e salute". From being an emotion that was to be cast by those wealthy and cosmopolitan enough to do so, jealousy could be construed as a sort of luxury itself in 1964. Both Germi and Pietrangeli in fact seemed to be commenting in fact on the decadence of the upper classes, whether in nineteenth century Sicily or in the Italy of the boom.

Where opinions might have begun to divide on jealousy was, as a 1959 article in *Tempo* magazine revealed, along the lines of generation. A 1959 feature in *Tempo* magazine entitled "I giovani e l'amore" and based on a group interview carried out with a group of young Milanese men and women – mostly students – between the ages of 16 and 22, featured almost all of them resoundingly rejecting jealousy as retrograde, old fashioned behaviour that had no place in their lives<sup>49</sup>. In the interviewer's words, "la prima reazione a questa parola è stata una serie di sorrisi di superiorità"<sup>50</sup>. While the journalist questioned whether these teenagers could be in love if they were not jealous, his interviewees considered that relationships should be based on equality and camaraderie, rejecting older gender codes and ideas of gender relations. There was a sense in the article that jealousy was lessening in Italian society. One young woman answered that she thought that people expressed jealousy less often because it was no longer in style ("come valore è scaduto") rather than because they didn't feel it. It would have been impossible for a man to express jealousy in her circle, because he would be dismissed as "un noioso, un antisociale, (...) un individualista, un fanatico"<sup>51</sup>. These opinions were in line with the changing mores and habits of 1960s youth more generally, as Stearns has noted for the US where the preoccupation with jealousy was disappearing from marriage and teenage advice manuals in this decade<sup>52</sup>. It was perhaps because of the strength of the association between love and jealousy in popular culture and in the media, that these young Italians felt they had to reject the notion with such clarity. However as Stearns notes, the fact that it was out of line with official discourse, did not

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<sup>47</sup> On "neorealismo rosa", see Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, cit., pp. 122-143.

<sup>48</sup> Landy, *Folklore of Consensus*, cit., p. 91.

<sup>49</sup> *I giovani e l'amore* (discussion with psychologist Dino Origlia), in "Tempo", 23 June 1959.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Stearns, *Jealousy*, cit., p. 119.

meant that jealousy was not felt in ordinary life<sup>53</sup>. In 1974 women's magazine *Annabella* ran a feature on jealousy, which also assumed that the emotion was somewhat out of step with contemporary Italy, but potent all the same<sup>54</sup>. *Annabella* reported a recent survey which seemed to confirm that “la gelosia è un sentimento fuori moda” since all those surveyed under the age of 25 declared themselves not to be jealous and found the sentiment “ridiculous”. However it was despite and perhaps because of the myriad ways in which codes of gender and sexuality were changing in Italian society – divorce had been legal at this stage since 1970 and was to be confirmed by referendum that May while the crime of adultery had recently been removed from the statute books – that jealousy was such a powerful force in Italian relationships and was even, according to *Annabella*, on the rise again in the 1970s. Langhamer notes a similar phenomenon in 1960s Britain: more permissive attitudes towards sexuality resulted in a rise in infidelity<sup>55</sup>. However at the same young Britons in 1969 put a greater emphasis on infidelity and jealousy as causes of marital failure than the previous generation. Jealousy played a curious role in the emotional lives of 1960s youth; loudly rejected for its association with misogyny and the control of women, it was also a way of naming responses to anxiety about changing codes of gender and sexuality, while also benefitting from the increased emphasis on honesty and exclusivity in love.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, jealousy was also becoming something of a feminist issue. The feminist magazine *Effe*, set up in 1973 and edited by Gabriella Parca and others, published an in depth feature on jealousy in March 1974<sup>56</sup>. This feature could be seen as part of a broader project on the part of the magazine to investigate and redefine the meaning of romantic love in the lives of women; jealousy was just another manifestation of how heterosexual love was oppressive to women<sup>57</sup>. It collected five different women's testimonies on their experiences of jealousy in intimate relationships. Experiences ranged from the Sicilian woman whose father had spent many years in jail for murdering a man who had simply gazed at his wife, to the more apparently modern couple who had decided to have an open marriage. However when the wife began to have an affair, her husband found himself unable to control his violent jealousy. The editorial conclusion was that jealousy was bound up with misogyny since it was really always about possession. “E poiché la gelosia nasce dal possesso o dal desiderio del possesso, e quindi comunque dalla paura di essere private di un oggetto, come potrebbero le donne essere gelose? La gelosia è un problema maschile, non il nostro”. Jealousy was certainly experienced differently by men and women; however both the testimonies collected in the article itself as well as other sources indicate that jealousy was most certainly experienced by women as well as men. The jealousy described by the women in the *Effe* feature was usually related to their lack of power in the relationship; jealousy was the only way for them to express their lack of autonomy in the relationship. These gendered patterns indicate yet again how the emotional language of jealousy could be – sometimes the only socially acceptable way – for men and women to assert their power or express their lack of control in a relationship.

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<sup>53</sup> Ivi, pp. 192-31.

<sup>54</sup> Emilio de' Rossignoli, *La gelosia*, in “Annabella”, ?? (indicate the precise day – no precise date, only month) Jan. 1974, pp. 10-17.

<sup>55</sup> Langhamer, *The English in Love*, cit., pp. 198-199.

<sup>56</sup> Willson, *Women in Twentieth Century Italy*, cit., p. 153; Lara Foletti, *La gelosia. Sostantivo plurale maschile*, in “Effe”, March 1974, n. 3, pp. 28-31.

<sup>57</sup> On the treatment of romantic love in *Effe*, see Penny Morris, *Feminism and emotion. Love and the couple in the magazine Effe (1973-1982)*, in “Italian Studies”, 2013, n. 3, pp. 378-98.

The way in which the *Effe* testimony on the open marriage that had gone wrong when the woman's husband proved unable to control his jealousy betrayed yet another clue about jealousy. The man, according to his wife, betrayed his feelings “nel più meridionale dei modi”<sup>59</sup>. If jealousy was an affliction, it was clearly regarded as one which did not afflict all Italians equally. It might also be proudly claimed as an expression of southern character and difference. When the actress Claudia Cardinale (born in Tunisia to Sicilian emigrants) was interviewed for *Grand Hotel* in 1959, she commented that she would always like to know that someone was jealous of her. “È una forma d'amore anche questa, vuol dire che qualcuno ti vuol bene al punto di soffrire per te. Io del resto, dal canto mio, sono, da buona meridionale, gelosissima”<sup>60</sup>. The connection between jealousy and the Italian south was a strong one, and evidently familiar across Italy in the post-war period.

Indeed, the behaviour associated with masculine jealousy fits closely with the unwritten code of honour, described by anthropologists and sociologists, which regulated courtship and sexuality and women's sexuality in some southern regions; Calabria and Sicily in particular<sup>61</sup>. Honour, as an intangible value, was usually only named as such when it was threatened, lost or came into contact with the law. Generally girls and women used the word “onesta” or “seria” rather than honourable to describe themselves, while in some cases at least, the word jealousy was used to describe the strict surveillance that their parents exercised on them as unmarried women<sup>62</sup>. In 1920s Milocca, in rural Sicily, when an unmarried girl became pregnant, destroying her chance at an arranged marriage with another man, her distraught mother was reported as saying: “I kept her carefully as a flower in a vase. I never let her go out at all, I was that jealous”<sup>63</sup>. Sociologist Renate Siebert reported similar language being used to describe parental surveillance in pre-war Calabria. Luisa, born in the 1930s in Calabria and interviewed by Siebert in the late 1980s also described her father as being very jealous of her, forbidding her from going out with friends and making disparaging comments about her working<sup>64</sup>. While jealousy was here used as shorthand for familial control and protectiveness rather than emotion, the unwritten honour code of southern society was nevertheless being expressed with words later associated more exclusively with romantic love. As the post-war economic boom began to transform society, with migration and the rise of mass culture altering family structures, courtship and gender relations, the importance of family to courtship lessened and increasing emphasis was placed on the romantic bond of the courting and married couple. The role of family in the surveillance of an unmarried woman began to be transferred to her romantic partner

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<sup>58</sup> Foletti, *La gelosia*, cit., p. 29.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Lino Ferrara, *Gelosia e malinconia*, in “Grazia”, 10 January 1959.

<sup>61</sup> See Jane Schneider and Peter Schneider, *Culture and Political Economy in Western Sicily*, Academic Press, New York 1976, pp. 86-102; John George Peristiany (ed.), *Honour and Shame. The Values of Mediterranean Society*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1966; Jane Schneider, *Of Vigilance and Virgins: Honor, Shame and Access to Resources in Mediterranean Societies*, in “Ethnology”, 1971, n. 1, pp. 1-24 and Gilmore (ed.), *Honour, Shame and the Unity of Mediterranean*, cit.

<sup>62</sup> See Parca, *Le italiane si confessano*, cit. The same kind of phrasing appears in the advice columns of *Grand Hotel* and in women interviewed for *Comizi d'amore* (by Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1965).

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Gower Chapman, *Milocca*, cit., p. 95.

<sup>64</sup> Siebert, *È femmina pero è bella*, cit., pp. 182-190.

and as such was increasingly packaged in the language of romantic love, consumed by young Italians both through popular film and the romantic stories of photo-romance magazines.

The connection between honour and romantic jealousy was made particularly clear in Pasolini's 1965 documentary film *Comizi d'Amore* in which he surveyed Italians across the peninsula about their views on love and sexuality. Speaking to a group of young men and women on the beach in Calabria, he asked them to describe what honour meant to them. He was met with pauses and hesitations; honour was difficult to vocalise and describe in relation to everyday life and personal feelings. However when he asked more direct questions about sexual behaviour and regulation, jealousy was brought up frequently. When he interviewed an elderly Calabrian peasant about why it was imperative for a woman to be a virgin on her marriage while a man was expected to have a sexual past, the answer was quite simply: "È la gelosia". When asked if things might change, the answer was negative: "sempre così (...) non c'è bisogno di capire". On the beach, he persisted with this line of questioning, inquiring as to why a Calabrian woman would not be allowed to go for a coffee alone although it was acceptable elsewhere in Italy. A young girl of no more than ten readily answered (of Calabrian men): "ma ... è forse perché sono un po' gelosi". Again here the social control of the honour code was readily expressed in language associated with romantic love. In both of these examples, jealousy was cited as a shorthand for a range of social codes and behaviour; it was named without question as their root, closing the discussion rather than opening it further. For the Calabrian peasant, there was no need to explain further – one either understood or not – while the notion of jealousy was clearly all too familiar even to a pre-pubescent girl. While honour was difficult to vocalise especially in the context of the changing society of the 1960s, it was well understood in the language of emotion.

The reportage of crimes of passion, domestic and intimate violence is yet another indication of the close connection between jealousy and honour. The stabbing of Rosaria Dissipatore by her husband Giovanni La Perla in June 1959 is a particularly striking example. Both Sicilian in origin, Dissipatore had moved to Florence in search of steady employment, since her husband had proved an unreliable provider. After establishing herself in Florence for some months, and finding a position in an ice-cream parlour, her husband joined her in the hope of persuading her to return to Sicily. When La Perla's attempts proved unsuccessful, he stabbed his wife in her sleep. Reported extensively in *La Nazione*, the crime was described as being motivated by jealousy rather than honour<sup>65</sup>. When La Perla was arrested and interrogated, jealousy was established as a motive: "si è potuto avere la conferma non solo che la gelosia, in termini generici, ha armato la mano del giovane siciliano, ma che il dramma è esploso proprio in relazione ad alcuni fatti che egli aveva appreso negli ultimi giorni"<sup>66</sup>. While establishing the immediacy of the motive would have been crucial to La Perla's defence in order to claim the mitigating circumstances of an honour crime, the facts referred to

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<sup>65</sup> In Maria Rosa Cutrufelli, Elena Doni, Paola Gaglianone et al., *Il novecento delle italiane – una storia ancora da raccontare*, Editori Riuniti, Roma 2002, p. 221, the stabbing is listed as an honour crime. However there is no mention of honour in *La Nazione*'s coverage of either the crime itself or the trial in April 1960.

<sup>66</sup> *Fu la gelosia ad armare la mano dell'uomo che accoltellò la giovane moglie*, in "La Nazione", 24 June 1959.

above all related to Dissipatore's working life, rather to any romantic rivalry<sup>67</sup>. Jealousy was again used as a shorthand for the controlling behaviour associated with the honour system, and here perhaps also the tensions that migration placed on traditional gender roles. In any case it appeared to have little to do with romantic love. Since La Perla was not quoted directly, it is not clear whether it was he – a working-class Sicilian migrant – or the journalist who named jealousy as the motive. However the link between jealousy and such violent behaviour was clearly a familiar and accepted one. The framing of domestic and intimate partner violence in terms of jealousy rather than honour or simple violence, also explains the rising incidence of jealousy in the press in the period from the 1950s to the 1970s – as noted above in *La Stampa* – especially when migration was placing such strain on traditional gender roles and family structures.

### Conclusion

Pasolini, in his attempt to persuade the elderly Calabrian peasant that customs could change, told him that there was no jealousy in the north of Italy. This article has indicated that his assertion, made in 1964, was very far from true. Although there was a clear link between jealousy and the honour code, prevalent particularly in the southern provinces of Sicily and Calabria, it must also be noted that several centuries of labelling the south of Italy as distinct and different also played into the perceptions of the post-war popular media. The stereotypes of southern character as emotional, passionate and prone to violence can be dated back at least as far as eighteenth century travellers' accounts to the regions<sup>68</sup>. The image of the passionate southerner was by the post-war period, so familiar, that it could proudly be claimed as a mark of difference, whether by Claudia Cardinale or the Calabrians interviewed by Pasolini. In the case of *Comizi d'amore*, the role of editing in creating such a stereotypical portrait of Calabrians and Sicilians must also be taken into account.

The survey of jealousy in post-war film and magazines – whether fiction, documentary or magazine inquiry – indicates at least the perceived prevalence of the behaviour associated with jealousy in post-war Italy. It could clearly have multiple and shifting meanings, whether regional, generational or gendered; it might be proudly claimed as a sign of love or indication of southern heritage, or dismissed as a tool of misogyny. It was difficult to pin down and replete with contradictions. While it can be mapped on to a particular style of masculine behaviour associated with honour and control, it was – despite *Effe's* assertions – not an emotion to which women were entirely immune. It was scorned by the young Milanese interviewed by *Tempo* magazine in 1959 and yet paradoxically, on the rise according to *Annabella* magazine in 1974. Often associated with the south, jealousy could also be used as a way of ridiculing the wealthy and urbane bourgeoisie of the economic miracle, as in *Il magnifico cornuto* where the emotion was associated not with ignorance or 'backwardness' but with idleness. The notion of jealousy as a pathology also offers intriguing insights into the ways in which Italian

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<sup>67</sup> On honour and Italian law, see Eva Cantarella, *Homocides of Honour. The Development of Italian Adultery Law over Two Millennia*, in David Kertzer and Richard Saller (eds.), *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present*, Yale, New Haven 1991, pp. 229-244 and De Cristofaro, *Retorica forense e valori della comunità*, cit.

<sup>68</sup> See Franco Cassano, *Il pensiero meridiano*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2007; John Dickie, *Darkest Italy: the Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno 1860-1900*, Palgrave, London 1999 and Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2005.



society and culture was absorbing and responding to the enormous social and cultural changes brought by the post-war boom.

It is difficult to pin down the exact meaning or meanings of jealousy in post-war Italy, and almost impossible to measure how much and how often the emotion was felt and experienced in the ordinary lives of post-war Italians. However the fact that the emotion was perceived to be in such abundance in the decades in question does yield some valuable insights into how Italian society and culture dealt with the economic boom. Often dismissed simply as a feature of southern society, it was evidently connected to much broader anxieties about how family structure and gender roles were changing between the 1950s and the 1970s. The fears expressed around the 1974 referendum that divorce would render Italian men “cornuti” is a clear indication of how broader anxieties about social change were expressed in terms of a threat to masculinity and sexual power<sup>69</sup>. As in post-war Britain, increased emphasis on romantic jealousy could also be linked to the rise of the companionate marriage, and the importance placed on honesty and exclusivity in romantic love<sup>70</sup>. Such parallels were not however perceived in post-war Italy and it was all too often seen as a peculiarly Italian emotion. The prevalence of the allegory of jealousy as illness points to the difficulty of expressing such unease in an Italy which was self-consciously positioning itself as “modern” and “European” and by implication distancing itself from the behaviour associated both with the south and with the past. It was perhaps precisely this desire to distance Italy from what were seen as southern emotional styles, while failing to deal with the contradictions and tensions within Italian masculinity itself regarding the changing family and new gender roles, that resulted in the curious and contradictory jealousy epidemic of the post-war period.

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<sup>69</sup> Maureen J. Giovannini, *Female Chastity Codes in the circum-Mediterranean. Comparative Perspectives*, in Gilmore (ed.), *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, cit, pp. 66-7. Similar fears are also expressed in *Comizi d'amore*, cit.

<sup>70</sup> Langhamer, *The English in Love*, cit., pp. 198-9.